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ABSTRACT

St. Bonaventure University holds a Language Day each spring, hosting some 3,900 area junior high and high school students. The buildings and facilities of the university campus are used, and activities include language competitions (exhibits, interpretative readings, language productions, audio-visual presentations and essays); a fiesta; foreign films; games; language lab demonstrations; a career panel; study and travel panel; cultural exhibits and an awards assembly. Information and details are given concerning registration; publicity; competition format, content, entry and judging; awards; fiesta; games; panels and speakers. The program has generated enthusiasm in students and has been a motivating factor in language learning. (CHK)

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE DAY--A LIVING LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

Communication and cooperation are the keys to Language Day's success at St. Bonaventure University. With over 140 volunteers the program necessitates the participation of members of the local community with language interest and skills, of area teachers, and of the University including staff, administration, students and faculty. Without massive cooperation and advance planning a day hosting 3900 students would be impossible.

Planning for a Foreign Language Day begins with consideration of a date and then physical factors whose importance cannot be exaggerated since they are by and large unchangeable.

We have found that a weekday is best for Language Day. Saturday involves an extra day's work for teachers and, more importantly, students often are too busy with jobs, family matters, or other interests to participate on any day but a school day. On the other hand the heavy use of university facilities makes impossible the holding of regularly scheduled classes. We, therefore, choose a day in May immediately following the completion of final exams. Many of our students are still available and willing to stay an extra day to help.

Like an army the support facility must be ascertained, i.e., the physical plant, food facilities, anticipated weather and cost factors. At our disposal for Language Day is the entire campus:

we use Reilly Center (including the fieldhouse floor, student lounge, choral room, half dozen classrooms, faculty lounge, athletic department's coaching area), an old fieldhouse, a small theatre, the Campus ministry (which includes a large lounge and a chapel which can be converted into a theatre), eighteen classrooms in Plassmann Hall, the Rathskellar and Dining Hall. The buildings are in a mall type area so that students need not cross any roads or walk any great distances. Signs and banners together with maps and guides orient the students.

Since the Journalism department holds an annual Press Day we knew as we planned our first Language Day that we could depend on the support of security, maintenance, and the director of the fieldhouse, whose acquired expertise only strengthened our program. Nevertheless each year we contact these people well in advance of the day, soliciting their advise to assist in tailoring their participation to our immediate needs. Without the enthusiastic support of the university staff a large scale Language Day would be impossible.

When we first conceived the idea of a Language Day we asked for input from teachers allowing the day to grow and develop according to their suggestions. The format developed emphasizes student participation, with the day's activities revolving around competitions

in Modern and Classical Languages. All students can involve themselves in these competitions either as participants or as spectators.

The philosophy of the day is aimed at keeping the students involved in as many activities as possible not only to avoid boredom but in order that they will come to the realization through their activity and the accomplishments of others that language learning is not an isolating experience but an integrating one.

The program in brief gives an overall view of the Day.

REGISTRATION	8:30 AM or on arrival	
COMPETITIONS	8:30 AM - 2:30 PM	
FIESTA	10:30 AM - 2:30 PM	
FOREIGN FILMS	9:00 AM - 3:15 PM	
CULTURAL FILMS	9:00 AM - 3:15 PM	
JUNIOR HIGH GAMES	1:00 - 2:30 PM	
JUNIOR HIGH LANGUAGE LAB DEMONSTRATION	10 - 11:30 AM	12:30 - 2:30 PM
VIEW CULTURAL EXHIBITS	10 AM - 3:00 PM	
CAREER PANEL	10:30 - 11:15 AM	2:15 - 3:00 PM
STUDY & TRAVEL ABROAD PANEL	10:30 - 11:15 PM	2:15 - 3:00 PM
LUNCHEON	Noon - 1:15 PM	

NOON ENTERTAINMENT	Noon - 1:20 PM
AWARDS ASSEMBLY	3:30 - 4:15 PM

Registration

A registration fee is charged to all students whether they participate or not in the competitions and is essential for the planning and execution of a successful day. The University cooperates marvelously, contributing both facilities and services; the registration fee frees the Departments of Modern and Classical Languages from crippling budgetary restraint.

A registration packet is prepared by language for each school which pre-registers. Each packet contains name tags, programs, maps, and an entry blank for each student or group of students who are competing. These entry blanks are mailed early to the schools and returned one month previous to Language Day. Stapled to each entry blank are instructions for the student on competition location and entry into the competition.

Advance payment is encouraged but not necessary; this reduces the amount of money being handled on the day itself and reduces the confusion at the central registration.

Publicity

Publicity is essential and includes mailing to individual teachers as well as advance notices in newspapers and over the air. We start early with our mailings, beginning with a notice

in September giving the date (get it on the school calendar) and theme for the day. Subsequent mailings (totaling five) give competition guidelines, entry blanks, reminder of the entry deadlines, registration forms, and general information concerning the day's activities. Bulk rate is used and an attempt is made to reach each individual language teacher in our mailing area which covers 125 mile radius; much of this area is rural. Planning for the competitions involves the drawing up of guidelines for each of the competition categories and mailing these guidelines six or seven months in advance of the date for Language Day. Early dissemination of competition information is useful for teachers who would be interested in a long range project. Information on standards the judges will follow is also included with the competition guidelines. Entry blanks are mailed later and must be returned a month before Language Day so that lists of entrants can be prepared and locations, according to numbers involved, [illegible] decided upon.

Competitions

Competitions begin with the first arrivals and continue throughout the day. Students compete in French, Spanish, German, Latin and Russian with Italian, Portuguese and Polish being included on demand. Of the five areas of competition, Cultural

Exhibits, Interpretative Readings, Language Productions, Audio-Visual Presentations, and Essays, only the Essay category can be judged before the actual day. Cultural Exhibits including posters, models, food displays and research projects are displayed and judged in the Reilly Center Fieldhouse. Approximately 110 tables are used for the exhibits together with the backs of movable bleachers and the fieldhouse walls. Thirty-four electrical outlets with extensions are made available since past experience has shown them to be essential in the exhibit area. The large number of entries in French, Spanish and Latin necessiate two sets of judges, one for senior high and another for junior high.

Interpretative Readings are poems or short prose selections which are either read or recited. An attempt is made to find lounge areas for these presentations since sounds are muffled in carpeted areas and students will hopefully be more at ease. Again students are divided by level for fairness of judging. A time limit of three minutes is set for each contestant and pronunciation and intonation are weighed heavily together with delivery and subject matter.

Language Productions generally involve many students and can either be short dramatic presentations or musical productions. Recognizing the impossibility of comparing a dramatic production

to a purely musical one we found it necessary to make a threefold division in this category, Dramatic, Dramatic-Musical, and Musical, as well as junior and senior high level. To give everyone equal opportunity a time limit should be imposed on each entry with advance notice that the judges may penalize lengthy productions. Approximately six minutes plus several minutes for set-up allows the maximum number of entries while at the same time giving the judges sufficient opportunity to observe and evaluate fairly. Language productions generally play to a full house; some of the more spectacular are asked to perform on the fieldhouse floor as entertainment.

The Audio-visual category includes video-tapes and slide presentations in the target languages. Fair judging of all entries necessitates a time limit and the use of the target language enables the judges to use uniform standards. Cultural content, pronunciation, intonation and technical execution are considered in descending order of importance. Equipment furnished is restricted to screens and videotape playback equipment (advance notice is given to the specifications of available equipment); projectors and recorders are to be furnished by the entrants. We do provide an AV person who assists in setting up the equipment and who operates our equipment.

Essays consist of an original composition of 200-250 words on a theme of topic which we try not to make too restrictive, for example,

for example, this year's theme, "Past and Present Contributions to the American Heritage." We ask the teachers to give no more help than they would for an out-of-class composition. Essay Writing is the only category which can be judged before Language Day and we encourage only the advanced students to enter this particular competition area.

Competition Entry and Judging

The procedure for competition entry needs to be clear and precise in order to avoid mass confusion and to facilitate the work of the judges. The entry blanks, which were completed and returned to us a month before Language Day, have been placed in the registration packets; the teachers distribute these entry blanks to the appropriate student(s) who in turn report (via instructions stapled to entry blank) to the appropriate competition area. The receptionist in the competition area will check the entry blank for accuracy and completeness against a typed list of all contestants in that area. Then a number is assigned to each entrant or group entry and written on the entry blank as well as on the typed list of contestants. The number is finally written on a fluorescent square of adhesive paper, one color for senior high and another for junior high, and given to the entry or entrants (in the case of group projects or language

productions). (For the exhibits the number is adhered to the exhibit and for the other competitions the student(s) display the number to the judges.) The judges (three per competition) write this number on the judging sheets and after these sheets are tabulated the scores are placed next to the appropriate number on the prepared list. This procedure not only proves to be simple and efficient but also results in impartial judging. At the completion of the judging and tabulating a copy of the list of contestants with scores and winners marked (generally a third of the entries are awarded ribbons) is sent to the Awards room where the winners names are typed for the assembly and the awards prepared for distribution.

Awards

Competent, reliable, well-trained people are essential at every point in the chain. The judging must be completed as quickly as possible with the tabulation being done during this same time period. The time lapse between the final judging and the winners list being drawn up must be minimal because there is approximately one hour from the closing of the last competition to the beginning of the Awards Assembly and the final work on the awards must be done then. With over 1200 competition entrants this task becomes monumental and only careful planning and

well-orchestrated directions properly followed ensures the success of the Awards Assembly.

Ribbons and certificates are awarded as prizes and judges are encouraged to be generous especially with special citations. At the Awards Assembly, which closes the day's activities special guests, panelists, and students who have contributed to the entertainment or to the fiesta are presented Awards of Recognition by a university official.

Fiesta

An old gymnasium decorated with ribbons, crepe paper, and posters is used for a Fiesta. Tables are set up and stacked high with cultural materials, maps and brochures generously supplied by the tourists offices of French, German and Spanish speaking countries. Since most teachers are too occupied to gather the cultural materials, packets should be prepared beforehand and made available to teachers at Central Registration. Quantities of free food samples are prepared beforehand by some members of the University community and by schools in attendance who are reimbursed for the cost of materials. Food samples are also distributed in the Reilly Center Fieldhouse by students

who prepare food exhibits for competition. Cultural films in English are shown at the Fiesta with films in the language being shown in three other locations. Volunteers who are willing and capable of working with large groups of people, who can organize an orderly distribution of cultural materials and of food and are willing to spend most of the day in one area are essential for the success of the Fiesta.

Games

Games, such as Bingo and Simon Says, in the target language are held for junior high students; small prizes (games and pins) are given to the winners. The games are popular and keep the students occupied and interested; they can be an effective teacher preparation tool for our students as well. We offer these games in an area near our language labs in order to encourage these students to experiment with the use of this facility.

Panels and Speakers

The main thrust of our panels and speakers has been "languages as an auxiliary skill" and we have chosen topics that fit in with this theme such as careers and travel abroad. (All panels and demonstrations are directed primarily to the students since the Day is designed for them.) Each panel or demonstration is presented

twice. Additional panels coming under the general theme of cultural enrichment such as cooking demonstrations, folk dances, and singing, are being added to the program. The primary incentive in planning these presentations is to involve as many students in each facet of the program as possible and cultural enrichment panels provide the proper outlet.

Volunteers

The many college students, particularly language students, involved in preparation and work for Language Day reap incalculable profit from their totally volunteer involvement with the high school students and their teachers. Although they have recently been in high school themselves their perspective is now different, so that they acquire a deeper understanding of people, of culture, and of language learning.

A master sheet is used to assign volunteers to specific areas and is essential since so many individuals are involved in performing so many diverse tasks.

As Language Day becomes a blue or red ribbon on a student's bulletin board in his or her bedroom or a certificate in the high school trophy case, I like to reflect on the meaning of Foreign Language Day at Bonaventure. One teacher has summed up the significance of the Day, "The enthusiasm generated here by Language Day has considerably helped enrollment in the program

of foreign languages, and it has proven to be a motivating factor to learn more and to learn the language better. This type of a day shows students what others are doing with a language, how they can put it to a better use for themselves, and why languages are important."